

AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: A KEY FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Agriculture is a vocational subject aimed at providing individuals, families and society with skills required for self-reliance and national development. The acquisitions of these skills provide job opportunities that could promote the economy of an individual and the nation. Entrepreneurship involves the acquisition of skills, ideals and managerial abilities necessary for personal self-reliance and national development. It is in this respect that this paper sought to portray that if agricultural entrepreneurship education is given the rightful attention it required, it is a key for sustainable national development in Nigeria as it will help to reduce poverty, unemployment and sustain the economy of the nation. It also highlighted the concept of agricultural science and entrepreneurship education, importance and the need for Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria and the Challenges facing Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria. Finally, relevance of agricultural education to the development of entrepreneurial skills for sustainable national development, Entrepreneurial Skills in promoting sustainable national development and problems of Agricultural Entrepreneurship Education development in Nigeria were also highlighted. Conclusion and recommendations were proffered, which includes that Government should support the development of Agricultural Entrepreneurship education for it is a critical strategy as economic growth.

Keywords: Agricultural entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurial Skills, sustainable development,

Agriculture is the cultivation of plants and husbandry of animals, that is, the management of living things and ecosystems to produce goods and services for the people. Agriculture includes farming, ranching; aquaculture; apiculture; horticulture; viticulture; animal husbandry, production of field crops, tobacco etc, processing, drying, storage, and marketing of agricultural products. Agriculture remains a key component of Nigeria's economy, and currently contributes about 40.0% of the GDP and employing about 70.0% of the active population, the sector, the sector has however, significantly underperformed its potential (Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), 2008). This has been clearly manifested in the very high food prices nationwide, food insecurity both at the household and national level and malnutrition especially in children. Agriculture is an age long occupation among the rural populace in Nigeria contributing immensely to the nation's economic growth. Four decades ago, Nigeria's agricultural sector was the backbone of the country's economy, contributing significantly to domestic production and employment. At that time there were evidences of progressive internal and international roles played by cocoa in the west, ground nut and cotton in the north and oil palm in the east, Adedipe, (1999) in Awotoye, (2016).

Agricultural education as a vocational course is an integral part of our educational system. Its main focus is on manpower training in skill acquisition in all the disciplines of agriculture. It is aimed at exposing, inculcating and developing knowledge, practical skills, competencies and attitude. It provides the right type of skills and knowledge that will make an individual function effectively in any agricultural related job.

Agricultural entrepreneurship education is “education and training for work; it is an education where skills are taught for the purpose of gaining employment through exposure to practical experience for self-actualization. Agricultural entrepreneurship education can be regarded as experience gained directly or indirectly that enables one to participate in a socially useful occupation either in or out of school, at various levels and to be sufficiently equipped to become an intelligent creator of goods and services.

This paper therefore reviews the conceptual clarifications of agricultural science education, sustainable development, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education, Importance of Entrepreneurship to the Economy, Challenges Facing Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria, Need for Entrepreneurship skills in Nigeria, relevance of agricultural education to the development of entrepreneurial skills for sustainable national development in Nigeria, Entrepreneurial Skills in promoting sustainable national development in Nigeria, problems of Agricultural entrepreneurship Education development in Nigeria and recommendation were made.

Conceptual Framework

Agricultural Science Education

Agricultural Science Education on its own is a sub-set of Vocational Education which is occupation related training aimed at exposing students to theoretical and practical agricultural skills. It also involves inculcating into them appropriate knowledge, competencies and attitudes relating to agricultural education. Since agricultural education is aimed at the acquisition of new skills and effective dissemination of technological innovation in agriculture for adoption by farmers for enhanced productivity, it is therefore imperative that this type of education becomes foundation stone.

Agriculture as a concept has been defined as the cultivation of soil for the production of crops and animals together with their products and the distribution, marketing and utilization of these agricultural products for man and the process of selling excess crops and livestock (Erebor, 1998). Agricultural Education is a systematic application of scientific and other organized knowledge to practical task and toward effective control over a nature, aimed at self-reliance, sustainable and steady progressive national development. This is in line with Olaoye (2004) in Awotoye (2018) which posited that “For Nigeria philosophy to be in harmony with Nigeria national development goals, education has to be geared towards self-reliance, effective citizenship national consciousness, and national unit as well as towards social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress. Education according to Urevbu (1985) is the process of human learning in which knowledge is imparted, faculties trained and skills developed.

Sustainable Development

The concept of Sustainable development is generally viewed as the holistic result of three components, namely: environmental, social and economic. It has been defined by many in various ways. Ezeabasili (2014) in Awotoye et al., (2018) defines sustainable development as a kind of development that can be initiated and managed properly in such a way as to give attention to

continuity and preservation as people explore an explicit available resources for the enlargement of their existence. According to Arogundade (2011) the major essential tool for achieving sustainable development should include;

- 1) Improving the quality of basic education
- 2) Reorienting existing education programme to address sustainable development.
- 3) Developing public awareness and understanding, and
- 4) Providing training for all sectors of private and civil society.

Oguejiofor & Ezeabasili (2014) cited in Awotoye, (2018) further argues that continued sustainable development is only possible or assured when concrete steps are taken to make the youth acquire skills that will enable them to be self-reliant and therefore become the tools for achieving development and its sustainability. Theories and research strongly suggest that sustainable development is meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs. By implication, sustainability is considered as a paradigm of a vision for the future in which economic, social and environmental considerations work in a balanced way to develop and improve the quality of life (Balan & Dragola, 2013) cited in Eravwoke, 2017.

Entrepreneurship

The concept of entrepreneurship evokes several meanings. This is a creative process of organizing, managing an enterprise and assuming the risk involved in the enterprise. Entrepreneurship education is a specialized training given to students of vocational and technical education to acquire the skills, ideals and managerial abilities and capacities for self-employment rather than being employed. Osuala (2010) defined entrepreneurship education as a programme or part of a programme that prepares individuals to undertake the formation and or operation of small business enterprises which also includes franchise operations for the purpose of performing all business functions relating to a product or service with emphasis on social responsibilities, legal requirement and risks for the sake of profit involved in the conduct of private business enterprises. Entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare people particularly the youths to be responsible, enterprising individual who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers by immersing them in real life learning experience whereby they can take risks, manage result and learn from the outcome (Suleiman, 2010).

Entrepreneurship is therefore “about learning the skills needed to assume the risk of executing a business, developing the winning strategies and establishing and executing them with all the vigour, persistence and passion needed to win any game” (Inegbenbor, 2006).

Entrepreneurship education

Entrepreneurship education contributes to the development and growth of the nation’s economy, generation of employment opportunities for the teeming school leavers, production of high quality goods and services, and the provision of the much needed skills for the management of business enterprises. No doubt, it is a dynamic process of vision, change, and creation. It requires an application of energy and passion towards the creation and implementation of new ideas and creative solutions.

Entrepreneurship education is a form of education which makes humans to be responsive to their personal, families and national needs and aspirations. Entrepreneurship competencies carry with it, the concept of skills and mental awareness which are needed to understand the functioning of an

already existing business. Entrepreneurship education is about developing attitudes, behaviours and capacities at the individual level. It is also about the application of those skills and attitudes that can take many forms during an individual's career, creating a range of long-term benefits to society and the economy. The concept of entrepreneurship education according to Anho (2014) is associated with various activities stated but not limited to the following:

- *Innovation, creativity, risk taking, initiative, visionary, focus, determination, team spirit, resourcefulness, financial control, self confidence, versatility, knowledgeable, dynamic thinking, optimum disposition, originality, people oriented, flexible in decision, responses to suggestions and criticism, need achievement driven, profit oriented, persistent and persevering, energy for hard work, adjustment to challenges and future looking.*

Importance and the Need for Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

Entrepreneurial development and education look more needful than ever before, in view of the role they play. Education enhances development and in this case, entrepreneurial development is a function of entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education is both necessary and required to prepare students for the life after school. It is a valid strategy for poverty reduction but it has to be planned and organized strategically. In response to 4th millennium goal, "Significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020". Entrepreneurship is a necessary ingredient for stimulating economic growth and employment opportunities in all societies. In the developing world, successful small businesses are the primary engines for job creation, income growth and poverty reduction. A skilled workforce is a basic requirement for driving the engine of industrial and economic growth and entrepreneurship education holds the key to building this type of technical and entrepreneurial workforce. Therefore, if agriculture is properly harnessed, can deliver goods and recover the nation economy because agriculture is a business oriented discipline.

Entrepreneurship creates sustaining activities that ensure:

- ❖ Supply of initiative and programmes
- ❖ Provision of job opportunities and infrastructural facilities
- ❖ Dissemination of information, finance, technology ability and skills for enterprises
- ❖ It brings about modernization, diversification, technology and
- ❖ Provision of enabling environment for growth and survival of small-scale industries
- ❖ Agriculture as a key to economy recovery
- ❖ Agriculture is a field of study that offers numerous occupations for individuals
- ❖ As a skill oriented course, it possesses the capability of equipping individuals with saleable skills that:
 - ❖ Make for self employment, Self reliance and Creation of wealth
 - ❖ Equips individual to attain and live a useful and satisfying life. (Arogundade, 2011).

Challenges Facing Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

There are numerous challenges facing entrepreneurship education which has affected negatively our national life and national development. Among the numerous challenges are:

1. No accessibility to entrepreneurship training /education, materials, lectures and facilities.
2. Fear to take risk and the stigma of failure.
3. Economic, social and political factors
4. No access to finance.

- Credit facilities for potential young entrepreneurs seeking to start their own business are not available.
- Inability to meet conditions set by financial institutions in Nigeria.
- Absence of adequate youth enterprise development support systems where credit facilities could be accessed to facilitate growth of enterprise.
- High inflation and Unstable exchange rates
- Registering business is also incredibly difficult

Relevance of Agricultural Education to the Development of Entrepreneurial Skills for Sustainable National Development in Nigeria

Development of any nation is seen among others on the mass production of food to serve the nation and to have enough remains for export to other nations. For Nigeria to survive and ensure high economic status, Nigerians should ensure adequate food production through adequate participation in modern agriculture. With population explosion in Nigeria, peasant agriculture may not solve the problem adequately. Nigeria therefore needs high skilled graduates in agriculture as entrepreneur which will come out to manage different agricultural farms through the application of modern principles, acquired through training in schools than waiting for white collar jobs that are nowhere to be found, by so doing, there will be development in nation. Agricultural entrepreneurship education contributes to economic development of the nation through the creation of jobs, subsequently employment which empowers the employees to earn income to meet their daily needs as well as contribute to the development of the nation.

Many entrepreneurial developments are available for the agriculturalist; Entrepreneurship in Agriculture produces and supply food e. g. yam, cassava, vegetables, fruits, meat, eggs. livestock's etc on which human and animal life and existence relies for the satisfaction of man and animal nutritional needs in the form of carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, oil etc for survival. An entrepreneur helps in the reduction of importation and this also helps in saving foreign exchange of a nation because an entrepreneur establishes industries that produce goods which in most cases, were formerly imported. This helps to reduce importation, conserves foreign exchange and in turn development of a nation. It also contributes to the growth of government's revenue as government get revenue from profit taxes paid by companies as well as income taxes paid by employees of agricultural ventures. Some other areas include:

- Forest and conservation of natural resources: Effective Agricultural entrepreneurship Education will provide the nation with efficient, self-reliant staff for the management of our forest, other natural resources from water management to solid mineral resources management.
- Foods processing, storage and disease controls is also an agent of agricultural education and a tool for entrepreneurial development.
- Bio-insecticides production for preservations of our crops: For the foods and cash crops is also important aspect of agricultural education (researcher) as well as a tool for entrepreneurial development for farmers.
- Agriculture: Agriculturist are caring out researches in order to improve crop varieties, through genetic engineering and hybridization and also improved animals breeding like poultry farming for entrepreneurial development for the teeming populations of Nigeria.

Entrepreneurial Skills in Promoting Sustainable National Development in Nigeria

Entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare people particularly youths to be responsible enterprising individuals, who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers by immersing them in real life learning experiences. The General Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria includes:-

- Addressing the problems of unemployment and underemployment.
- To encourage higher education institutions to generate knowledge and other competencies that will build an entrepreneurial human capital for national development.
- To help build an innovative and entrepreneurial culture in order to create a productive and socially responsible generation of graduates among others (Junaidu, 2011).

The acquisition of both the process and entrepreneurship skills, youth/students of Agriculture can venture into areas like Bee-keeping (Apiculture), Aqua-culture (Fish-Farming, Crab-Farming etc), Horticulture, Floriculture, Poultry Production, Snail-Farming, Rabbit Keeping, Cane-Rat Keeping, Processing and Storage of Agricultural produce etc (Ramatu, 2012).

Problems of Agricultural Entrepreneurship Education Development in Nigeria

Despite the aspirations of many, only a few people in this country actually carry out their intention of having their own agricultural business. In addition, agriculture business has unique problems. Binkley, (1980) in Okeke, (2012) noted this when he related that 'Agric Business is unique and has unique problems associated with it'. According to him, agriculture business deals mostly with life (both animals and plants) and perishable. These problems include:

- **Land:** Agricultural lands are not obtained by all investors, despite the fact that the government promulgated land use decree. The land ownership systems in Nigeria viz communal and individual land tenures do not allow for commercializing agriculture as it leads to land fragmentation which is not conducive to large – scale agriculture.
- **Natural Hazards:** Most Nigerian soils are prone to erosion and leaching hence, the soil nutrients are depleted. The depleted soils do not favour the growth of crops and pastures for livestock feeding. The effect of this is the reduction in the crop yields which consequently results to high cost of production. This type of situation invariably discourages the young agricultural investors.
- **Storage Facilities:** Most agricultural products especially vegetables, fruits, animals and fish products are perishable. They cannot be stored for a long time without going bad. This is because there are little or no processing facilities. Since processing and storage facilities are lacking, most of the agricultural products are sold at give away price during the harvest period for fear of spoilage.
- **Capital:** Though government established loans and credit schemes, most of the agricultural investors have little or no access to agricultural loans and credit facilities. Some of them have no knowledge of how to obtain loans from financial loans due to banking policies in this country. Banking policies are so tight that no commercial bank will ever agree to lend money without adequate security from the borrower. The majority of the young investors cannot afford the collateral security required by banks.
- **Infrastructural Facilities:** Most agricultural production takes place in rural communities. These rural communities lack basic infrastructural facilities like electricity, pipe borne water, good roads and other infrastructures which make life more comfortable. Therefore, people have no incentive to live and work in rural areas hence investment in agriculture suffers due to migration of youths.

- **Transportation:** transportation of agricultural produce from production to marketing centres poses problems as most production centres are not linked by good roads which results in produce being sold at a loss. This situation is also complicated by the absence of processing and storage facilities as most agricultural goods are seasonal and so result is enormous wastage.
- **Lack of Strong Patent Law:** An agricultural entrepreneur in Nigeria is faced with the problem of from foreign producers. The local entrepreneurs are not protected, the situation is worsened by the apparent lack of faith in the Nigeria patent law which many entrepreneurs feel offers them little protection against piracy.
- **High Cost of doing business in Nigeria:** Entrepreneurs are in business (take risk) because they want to make profit. Where the expected return from a venture is lower than the opportunity costs, it will act as a disincentive for the entrepreneur. Due to collapsed infrastructural facilities and unbridled corruption, where entrepreneurs have to spend huge sums to provide some basic infrastructure and bribe government officials it makes the cost of doing business in the country to be too high with adverse implication for profitability.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper tried to unfold sustainable national development in Nigeria through the development of Agricultural entrepreneurship education. Agriculture still remains the bedrock for economy growth and development of any nation. It is generally agreed that entrepreneurship is a necessary ingredient for stimulating economic growth and employment opportunities in all societies. An entrepreneur promotes employment rather than seeking for an employment and these entrepreneurial developments are available in agriculture thus; encouraging self-reliance and reducing unemployment rate in the country. There is need to embrace and develop this type of education and provide all the necessary resources needed to make it functional because it imperative to sustainable national development.

Entrepreneurship in Agriculture produces and supply food on which human and animal life and existence relies upon. This helps in the reduction of importation and also helps in saving foreign exchange because an entrepreneur establishes industries that produce goods which in most cases, were formerly imported thereby promoting made in Nigeria. It also contributes to the growth of government's revenue as government get revenue from profit taxes paid by companies as well as income taxes paid by employees of agricultural ventures

Recommendations

There is need to embrace and develop this type of education and provide all the necessary resources needed to make it functional. Based on the roles of entrepreneur in agriculture and its problems the following recommendations were postulated:

- Government should support the development of entrepreneurship education as it is a critical strategy for economic development.
- Government should intensify efforts towards the construction of feeder roads as it would help the agricultural investors transport their products to markets and urban areas for easy sale.
- Government should established a patent law in favour of the agricultural entrepreneur and encourage made in Nigeria products.

- Funding of Agriculture science education department in various institutions should be enhanced to encourage skill acquisition that aims at creating wealth for individuals, families and the nation.
- Government should encourage families and individuals through social security platform to engage in entrepreneurial skills through training. They should also fund the training and ensure that soft loans are made available on completion of training for individual to commence business. Finally, government should adequately fund, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate entrepreneurship education programmes in Nigeria.

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